

Feb 2, 2007

Testimony HB ⁴⁰³~~459~~, Constitutionally recognize life begins at conception

House Judiciary, Room 137 8am

Good morning Madam Chair Rice, and members of the committee. My name is Moe Wosepka, I currently serve as Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference, the public policy arm of the two Catholic Diocese in Montana.

I am here today to speak in favor of HB ⁴⁰³~~459~~. Catholic teaching is consistent in commitment to life from conception to natural death. It is in this frame that we support efforts to recognize life begins at conception.

In November (2002) *Time* magazine ran a special report written by J. Madeline Nash: ***Inside The Womb: An amazing look at how we all begin.*** Modern visualization techniques have opened a window into the wonder and awe of encountering fetal life in three-dimensions.

The photography was based on ***From Conception to Birth: A Life Unfolds*** (doubleday) by a photographer and a writer, Alexander Tsiaris and Barry Werth.

This innovative technology of imaging was described in the Times article as "painstakingly accurate and aesthetically stunning." It graphically records the marvel of fetal development from conception to birth, some 40 weeks later, of "a miniature human being."

These computer-enhanced images compose an invitation to wonder how "a fertilized egg ---a mere speck of protoplasm and DNA encased in a spherical shell ---can generate such complexity?"

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* formulates the constant doctrinal teaching of the Church: "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person --among which is the inviolable right of every human being to life." (CCC n. 2270) The Catechism refers to *Donum Vitae*, the 1987 Vatican instruction on reverence for human life in its origin (DV "1).

Pope John Paul II As Bishop of Rome, declared the constant moral doctrine of the Church: ***"The human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception"***

The teaching is constant. And within that frame we support efforts to recognize life begins at conception.

Thank you.